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:: :: CENTRAL SECRETARIATE OF SODALITIES OF OUR LADY :: ::

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THE SECOND CENTENARY OF THE CANONIZATION OF ST. ALOYSIUS

How to celebrate it with profit

This article deals with a great project which gives hope of resulting in immense spiritual benefit to the Catholic youth of the world. It is proposed to honor St. Aloysius, the Patron of Youth, by an earnest crusade directed to the renewal in Catholic youth of the spirit of religion and purity, and what we may call Aloysian idealism. Considering the truly apostolic character of this movement and the further fact that St. Aloysius is the secondary patron of very many Sodalities of Our Lady, we feel confident that both Sodalists and their Reverend Directors will join with us in bringing this great work to a successful conclusion.

Occasion and End.

On the last day of next year, December 31, 1926, it will be *just two hundred years since St. Aloysius Gonzaga was solemnly canonized by Pope Benedict XIII.*

We cannot let this day go by without aiming at something worthy of the Saint, and of real profit for our Catholic young men.

Our plan is not to celebrate the day with merely external pomp and ephemeral devotion, but to find a way of getting a *maximum of solid results.* We wish to use this rare occasion to place the amiable and inspiring figure of St. Aloysius in such a clear, compelling light that our young men will feel themselves strongly urged to live in the spirit of their glorious Patron, and enlightened and strengthened by his example, set themselves manfully to do their share for the Christian regeneration of society.

Manly young men are taken by manly and heroic examples and are easily moved to great desires and deeds, when noble ends are proposed to them. Let us, therefore, put the example of this noble youth before them and invite them to prepare themselves to re-establish Christian ideals in modern life and society of which they will soon be the leaders.

Let us invite Catholic young men in all parts of the world to celebrate the centenary of their patron by uniting with each other in *solemnly adopting a common program of life* which embodies the immediate and continued exercise of a serious apostolate (1).

The Aloysian Program of Life.

This program of life, which we would call Aloysian, will contain a few brief items; it will not embrace all the duties of Catholic young men, but only the chief ones, and those briefly expressed in a virile and rather military style. We give a sketch of this program here, but we wish to note that as to form and style, it should be recast by Directors so as to suit the national character. As to substance however, it should be the same everywhere so that it may be truly called a *common* program.

The program proposed to and accepted by the Central Committee constituted for the purpose of this celebration (and which is presided over by His Eminence the Cardinal Vicar of Rome), is in substance as follows:

(1) Very Rev. Father General wrote the Rev. Fathers Provincial on October 7th, about this matter, and we present only what pertains to Directors of Sodalities.

We, Catholic young men, standing in spirit at the tomb in Rome of our glorious Patron St. Aloysius, and uniting ourselves with all young men throughout the world who honor him, pledge ourselves to a program of life which consists in following essentially St. Aloysius' examples and which will make us apt and worthy cola-borers for the renewal of life and society according to Christian ideals.

"Wherefore we solemnly and uniformly declare that the following is our deliberate will:

1. We will always stand firm in the Catholic *faith*, amidst the infidelity and desertion of others however many they be.

2. We will faithfully love the *Church*, the spouse of Christ, and we will defend her as our mother against the persecutions of her adversaries.

3. We will make it a sacred duty to acquire *Catholic mental culture* and a deeper knowledge of religion.

4. Since all true fortitude is rooted in victory over the passions, we will, according to the example of St. Aloysius, guard the *purity* of our souls, especially by frequent Communion and by special devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

5. Finally, we will zealously cultivate *a truly Catholic character:* fidelity, truthfulness, gratitude towards parents and benefactors, friendship among ourselves, liberality and magnanimity toward the weak.

We beg the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and our Holy Patron St. Aloysius, to bless these resultions, to give us abundant grace to keep them, and to make us fit for a fruitful apostolate, so that through our endeavors also, human society may soon experience *the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ.*

Details of the Celebration.

A Central Committee has been established in Rome to prepare for the Aloysian Centenary. Ours will be its soul, but not its body; as it is made up of secular priests, religious and laymen. This Committee will send an invitation signed by the Cardinal President to all bishops and to higher superiors of religious orders and congregations, asking them to induce parish-priests and others subject to them to participate in this movement (1). Detailed instructions will be available for all parish priests and Directors of youth; likewise versions of the program in various languages, synopses of conferences talks on St. Aloysius, brief lives, etc.

Parish-priests and Directors will be asked

1. To arrange that in the course of 1926, at an opportune time (e. g. about the feast of St. Aloysius, June 21), there may be held in some church, or oratory destined for youth, a *novena* (or at least a triduum) in honor of St. Aloysius, with *conferences* concerning him, in which also the above program may be fitly explained. Then such young men as have accepted the program and are determined to enter the sacred compact, are to be invited to *sign their names* on sheets of paper specially prepared for the purpose.

2. Towards the end of the year, these sheets are to be bound and sent to Rome, where they will first be presented to the Holy Father, and then, on the anniversary itself of the canonization (December 31, 1926), they will be *solemnly deposited at the tomb of St. Aloysius* in the Church of St. Ignatius in Rome. The books of each nation will be deposited by *two or three national delegates*, one of whom will pronounce in his mother-tongue a very very brief encomium of the Saint.

On the same day throughout the whole Catholic world, there is to be a *General Communion of all young men*, after which the compact will be solemnly recited aloud by all who signed it. In the afternoon, Aloysian "Academies" will be held wherever possible, in which the program of life will be explained by the young men themselves.

The good hoped for.

It is easy to see what manifold good may be expected from this celebration, aside from the spiritual reformation of very many young men and even perhaps the vocations of many to a higher life.

For, 1st, it will help and please the young men very much to feel that they share the same aspirations with so many thousands of the best youths of all nations. Thence one may hope for *greater seriousness* in making their holy resolves and greater costancy in keeping them. Besides they will acquire a deeper *consciousness of their Catholicity* and Christian brotherhood.

2. A *holy emulation* will be excited among growing youths, since all will be anxious that their parish or association or diocese or country be not behind the others, or send proportionately fewer signatures to Rome.

3. Those who are already members of Catholic Associations, Circles, Sodalities, Colleges, etc., will find an exceptionally good occasion to exercise their *apostolate* among others of their own age; it will be their part to spread the idea of the celebration, to bring to the conferences, tridua and novenas the greatest possible number of young men, including those who are not in any organization. Finally, they can help parish-priests and Directors to enhance the impressiveness of the solemn ceremonies.

4. Organizations for Youth will find here a new and *purely religious nourishment* for the soul and a *field of action* as well (without any new

(1) In each Province of the Society, Fathers will be appointed to promote the movement, and also following the orders of the Rev. Provincials to deliver to their Lordships the Bishops, the letter of the Roman Committee.

permanent organization arising). Directors will have new matter at hand which they will be able to use even years later, as *an incentive* to the periodical renewal of religious fervor in their charges.

5. If there be any parish priests or Directors of circles, etc., who are wholly taken up with material affairs and give no special attention to the religious life of their young men, they will be brought almost without noticing it, to a higher and wider degree of usefulness in the service of youth.

Let us see now

What Ours can do

in an enterprise so useful and naturally so dear to us.

1st, they can *promote and propagate the idea* by the written and the spoken word, inviting and urging the secular clergy, and young men also, to actively encourage the undertaking of the work everywhere (3).

2d, Ours can help by *giving Conferences on St. Aloysius* in the various parish churches and Catholic centers to which we referred above.

3d, a very urgent need is that of *brief lives of St. Aloysius* in the different languages, presented in an attractive style and prepared so as to take with young people. The Central Committee will recommend these lives so that their sale in good numbers is assured. It would be a good service, therefore, if in every country one Father would undertake the work, *notifying the Central Committee* of his intention so that others might not be employed uselessly at the same task.

4th, *those who have influence with priests or with the larger organizations* for youth, would do well to suggest the advisability of favoring the centenary activities. They might also aid them to settle on a suitable plan of action, and afterwards, keep the Central Committee informed of the progress of affairs (4).

5. All are invited to *help the Central Committee* as far as they can, advising it as to execution or local difficulties, and offering themselves, where possible, to act as intermediary in solvingthem.

Finally, it should be noted that

1. *No new association* or permanent organization is aimed at by these Centenary activities. Hence no competition is to be feared.

2. Only *young men and boys* are concerned (from 12 to 25 years of age, more or less).

(3) *Illustrated postal cards*, bearing a brief account of the centenary activities along with a picture of St. Aloysius, will be very useful for propaganda. Within a month from now, such cards can be bought from the Central Aloysian Committee, Via del Seminario 120, Roma 19. *Their sale* will also help to pay the necessary expenses of the Committee. Indeed, if each Cellege of the Society will buy ten cards for each student (at 15 centesimi a piece) all the expenses will be paid and wide propaganda of the idea will easily be effected.

(4) Might it not be advisable to establish a special *National Committee* for this purpose?

3. Very wide *liberty is left as to details*, e. g. in applying the main idea to the genius and character of the particular nation, and to circumstances of times and places.

4. All *correspondence* on the subject should be addressed to **"The Central Aloysian Committee, Via del Seminario, 120, Roma (19).**

A COMPARISON

There is a little congregation called the Ladies of Bethany which was founded some five years ago to work among the pagans in Holland Beginnings are always made with the children, whose conversion is often the prelude to the baptism of their parents. All of the Ladies are bound by the ordinary vows of religion, but some are contemplative while others are active. The latter after their novitiate and a period of training in Christian Doctrine and the manner of teaching it, as well as instruction in other subjects likely to forward their apostolate, doff their religious garb and in secular dress devote themselves for sixt years to the pagans. All the education they give is motivated by the desire of making good Christians, and hence Christian Doctrine holds the central place in their work. But every year these devoted Catechists return to the convent for a month to renew their spiritual life in a contemplative atmosphere, and every sixth year is spent in similar retirement.

Founded by a Jesuit, Fr. Jac. van Ginneken, the congregation presents a striking application of the 16th Rule of the Summary: efficacy in exterior labors comes from the interior spirit.

To our mind there is quite an analogy between the Sodality of Our Lady and the Congregation of the Ladies of Bethany. Those who drew their constitutions prescribed exterior activities in favor of the neighbor, and they put the teaching of Catechism in the front rank. If the Congregation of Bethany gives its attention to other subjects which will enable its members to give a Christian education to those who come under its influence, the Sodality also prescribes the exercise of charity to the sick and imprisoned, and other activities like these according as circumstances may demand. It is true that these women are bound by vow and that their exterior activities are their lifework whereas the life of the Sodalist is cast in the world, and generally it is only for brief intervals that he can devote himself to helping his neighbor. But his work must be carried on in substantially the same spirit and with substantially the same means. All his catechising, visiting the sick or the imprisoned, teaching night school etc., derives its efficacy in great part from the exercises of personal piety and the direction in the path of perfection which comes to him through dealing with the Director and the other members of the Sodality. To it he must return to shake off the dust of conflict from his soul; from it he must draw new strength for further efforts, in it he must see what is the real end and scope of his activities, and resolve anew in prayer, and with advice and instruction to continue in his apostolic endeavors.

Considerations for a novena

preparatory to the

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

The following plan of a novena has been prepared as a help, or at least a suggestion, for such Directors as may wish to take the occasion to join the **praises of Our Lady** with some considerations on the **nature and advantage of the Sodality**. The better the Sodality is known, the more intelligently and energetically will Our Lady be served. What better fruit than this can we expect from the novena and the feast?

INTRODUCTION.

To grasp the importance of the Immaculate Conception as regards the salvation of men, we must keep before our eyes.

1. The **sad condition** of the human race due to sin and the almost universal dominion of the devil.
2. Then the **hope of salvation** which God wished our first parents to conceive, that victory over the old serpent would come through the Mother of God.
3. The **source of all this strength** and victory, namely, the intimate union of Mary with her Divine Son.
4. The **perpetual warfare** between Mary and the devil.
5. The **virtues** with which the Blessed Virgin guarded her innocence.
6. The **help Mary gives** others to conquer the enemies of souls.
7. How she inspires her followers to work like **apostles** among their brethren and conquer sin.
8. And that too, in an **orderly fashion,** even though they be not priests.
9. Lastly, **the happy crown** to which this victory leads.

All the above may be applied particularly to the Sodality to show its utility and to promote true Sodality life.

FIRST DAY

Man after the fall.

" Sin maketh nations miserable"
(Prov. 14, 34)

Consideration. What a **curse** fell on mankind because of Adam's sin? The mind was clouded, the will weakened, the flesh became insolent, man's perversion began with childhood, conscience and the law of nature almost vanished, vice and crime abounded.

What a terrible picture **historians** paint of pagan antiquity? (Döllinger, St. Paul, Romans, 1). How many lives were darkened by passions and sorrows! And how slight was the hope of eternal life to console and encourage the miserable! Antiquity echoes the voice of the Wise Man: " Sin maketh nations miserable ".

The whole world was sighing for the divine being who should relieve the misery due te the first sin and the devil's domination. And **God,** foreknowing this, and pitying man's helplessness, **decreed the remedy:** that His Eternal Son should become man. Moreover, he further willed that the Redeemer's Virgin Mother should ever be exempt through her Son's merits from the power of the Devil. Behold the **first victory** gained over the fiercest enemy of our race.

Application. Although almost twenty centuries have elapsed since the Redemption was accomplished, nevertheless the **enemy of God still domineers** over many souls almost as cruelly as in the centuries before Christ. Two thirds of the human race are **infidels** and of the rest almost half are **outside the true Church.** Among Catholics themselves, many have no more of religion than the name. How many wrecks of religion wherever sin reigns! How much unbelief, contempt of the Church, pride of life, avarice, lust, hatreds! And how much consequent unhappiness; what struggles between classes and between nations! What spiritual hunger and thirst consume those who know not why they must live, suffer and die!

On the other hand, how much these miseries are relieved wherever our religion stretches forth its helping hands. What peace and joy fill the souls of such as are converted to God and live according to the Gospel.

God willed that the **first step toward liberty,** and relief should be made in the Immaculate Conception. Thus also in our days, a most powerful help towards God and peace and happiness, is offered by Mary. See what her **Sodality has accomplished** in the last four hundred years for the restoration of religion. (" *Acies Ordinata*", Ed. Lat. I, p. 40, and anywhere in Father Drive's, " *The Sodality of Our Lady, Historical Sketches* "Kenedy, N. Y.)

Today also many pastors of souls proclaim that a purer and stronger Catholic life began in their flocks from the day when Sodalities worthy of the name were established among them. Devotion to Mary leads us straight to intimate familiarity with Christ and earnestness in His service. But where such devotion is exercised by many persons as members of a society, experience proves that wonderful fruits soon result.

If therefore, we wish to renew Society' restore religion break the devil's empire, and destroy the source of sin and unhappiness, we must have nothing more deeply at heart than the advancement of the Sodality of Our Lady.

SECOND DAY

The Promise of the Immaculate Mother

"Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (Is. 7, 14)

Consideration. When the human race had fallen, God would not deprive it of all hope, but promised it redemption. This promise, made in the garden (Gen. 3, 15), He renewed and particularized by the Prophets. For He wished man, though fallen, to remember his high vocation and God's grace and mercy, so as to be sustained in his troubles and even in the mire of sin cherish the hope of a purer and happier life, and ardently desire the Redeemer to come. From the very beginning, Our Lady is mentioned in the promise, as if God wished to increase hope by assuring men that the Redeemer would be accompanied by a sweet and merciful mother. *"Behold a Virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son"*. For what would be gained by having a Redeemer, if all despaired of the possibility of salvation? Faith and hope *"expecting the redemption of Israel"* were necessary to lay hold on salvation.

Application. Even today holy hope has not lost its importance. It is, with faith, the foundation of all justification. Whence also, today, if we wish to restore the kingdom of God in the world, and to bring religion back to its first fervor, and to convert sinners, we must first of all take care to teach men their high vocation and inspire them with **confidence in the mercy of God** who desires to cure the sinner and offers him His grace. Many are frightened by sermons which bring out only the terrible truths; whereas they are touched by the hope of mercy and the consciousness of being called to a higher life than that of the beast which lapses into complete nothingness with death. Now, if we would gain men, we ourselves, whether priests or laymen, must first be filled with **faith** and **holy joy.** Our **example** even more than our words, must show the beauty and richness of a religious, chaste and Catholic life. But what will help more towards this hope and holy joy than **devotion to Mary?** The children of Mary are always joyful. She is the *"cause of our joy"*, *"the mother of beautiful love and holy hope"*. We know that *"the sons of Mary cannot perish"*.

Moreover, this holy hope and joy are wonderfully increased where many sons of Mary make a single family like the Sodality. Their love and service of Mary is perfected by union of hearts and efforts. Truly if there be a sign of a good Sodality it is the unperturbed serenity and joy which accompany a good conscience and holy confidence. (A bishop from this sign alone divined that some schoolmistresses on the same train with him were Sodalists). In the Sodality, as St. Bernard used to say of religion, man lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more quickly, and is more frequently blessed with divine grace, etc. How can joy fail the children who have such a Mother in their midst!

Let us then love Mary; hope and joy will follow, and we will hence be better fitted to announce to our brethren, the new and higher life of hope and reconciliation, grace and divine mercy.

THIRD DAY

The Source of Strength

"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, betwen Thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head". (Gen. 3, 15)

Consideration. Whence did such strength come to Mary that through her seed she should crush the old serpent? How is it that in the protevangelium and in other prophecies of the redemption, the humble maid of Nazareth is almost always named with the Divine Redeemer? Why was it fitting to mark her with the seal of the Immaculate Conception and thus exempt her alone from the unhappy law by which we all are affected. All the Fathers and theologians answer: because she was to be the *Mother of Christ.* From that prerogative flowed all her privileges, glories and virtues. She could conquer the devil, because she held in her maternal embraces Him who is absolute Sanctity and the Conqueror par excellence. *"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed... He (or She with Him) shall crush thy head"*. Take away from Mary, if that were possible, her intimate union with Christ and you would have nothing.

Application. We also can belong to the family of Christ through grace and charity, altough we can never attain to the dignity of the Mother of God. The closeness of our union with Christ will be proportioned to our acts of charity and other supernatural virtues. This is the only way to true greatness. Moreover, we shall be in a certain manner the *"mother and brothers of Christ"*, if we *"hear his word and keep it"*, as He himself said (Matt. 12, 48). We foster this union with Christ and this supernatural, life in ourselves, 1st, by individual zeal, but much more fruitfully, 2d by collective social labor, as happens in religious orders. *"Where there are two or tree gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them"* (Matt. 18, 20). But as all are not called to religion, the Church provides societies capable of raising laymen to the heights of the spiritual life. Among such societies, the Sodality of Our Lady has a special place, having for its principal object to lead its members to a truly Christian life and to the study of perfection through devotion to Mary, History testifies that the Sodality has always been an eminent school of virtue and sanctity. And no wonder; for the love of the Blessed Virgin has an admirable power of kindling the love of Christ in souls and uniting them in the constant pursuit of what is best. The school of Mary is the school of intimate love for Christ, and of faithful service in His cause. Hence all its virtue and efficacy.

Many Catholic organizations today are languishing, and ready for dissolution because they do not care enough for the **interior life** and do not lay deep foundations. Their sad example should teach us to base all our external activity on a solid interior life. So the first Rule of the Sodality places **"ardent devotion, reverence and filial love towards the Blessed Virgin Mary"** as the first aim of the Sodality. Through this devotion, **personal sanctity** is to follow and lastly **zeal for others** and the Church.

FOURTH DAY

Victory over sin

"She shall crush thy head"
(Gen. 3, 15)

Consideration. The Blessed Virgin's first victory over the devil was her Immaculate Conception. Sin which infected all other human beings, Christ excepted, never violated the soul of Mary. The prince of this world came and in her he had not anything (John. 14, 30). This was the first defeat inflicted on the devil. Through her whole life, she carefully guarded her initial purity and never let herself be stained by the smallest personal fault. She was the brightness of eternal light and the mirror without spot. Amid the dense darkness which enveloped myriads of men, amidst the most perverse manners of fallen nature, she was the lily amid thorns, delighting the heart of God and, as St. Bernard says, attracting him to earth. Not puffed up by honors, she was not borne away by impatience in adversity. She hated not her most criminal foes; amid the deepest sorrow, she did not murmur. She was not drawn aside by pleasure, nor would she yield to the angel, at the price of her virginity.

Application. To please God, to conquer the enemy, or to do great things for Christ, first, renounce sin, and then make war on bad inclinations. "But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2, 14). Unless you free yourself from sin :

a) you cannot please God or hope for higher graces;

b) you shall not gain peace of soul;

c) you shall not be able to exercise a fruitful apostolate; for you pull down with one hand what you build up with the other. (Here the evil effects of sin, mortal or venial, may be developed).

Now to overcome sin, a great help will be the Sodality of Our Lady. It furnishes abundantly whatever strengthens the soul. In it, you have the fatherly vigilance of the Director, and the fraternal watchfulness of your fellow Sodalists. You have the exhortation, monthly confession at least, and daily spiritual exercises. The image of the Mother of God is always before you. You have the consciousness of having pledged your honor to follow her and you feel yourself the favored child of the greatest of queens. What can better restrain one from sin than such a consciousness and such bonds?

Love the Sodality and you will ever be victorious over sin. How many owe their innocence to fidelity in frequenting the meetings! How many on the other hand, began to fall from grace when they turned their backs on the Sodality!

FIFTH DAY

Victory is sure

"She shall crush thy head"
(Gen. 3, 15)

Consideration. Although the Blessed Virgin was not only free from sin but from inclination to it as well, no one doubts thats she guarded herself against all the dangers of the world with uninterrupted care. For who can ever imagine her as other than modest, watchful over her senses, ever mistress of herself, holding her tongue, and far removed from the wiles of the world? All her life, not only was she entirely free of any blemish, but even from any vanity, useless anxiety for perishable things, familiarity with the world, absorption in creatures. She had no need to live with such great restraint, – her innocence was secure – but she wished to give an example of exquisite purity to her innumerable children.

Application. All masters of the spiritual life insist that for victory over sin, it is not enough to avoid vices themselves but that **remote perils** are to be fled, and that the soul should be walled round with the fear of God and the custody of the senses.

The Sodality of Our Lady is a great help in this matter. For *a*) by the **exhortations of the Director,** and by the **Rules** it renders us constantly attentive to dangers, mortification and to vigilance over self.

b) It puts us **in the keeping of our brethren;** being observed by them, we are more careful in our mode of life, our diversions, etc.

c) More than ordinary watchfulness over self is required by the **exercises of piety** common in the Sodality, and these latter (which otherwise we might omit) are, performed by us with more constancy and regularity, just because of the *social bond* of the Sodality, the example, the vigilance, the promises, the Rules etc.

Thus the Sodality leads its members toward constant freedom from sin, and so merits the title applied by the Church to the Blessed Virgin, of *"a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up"*, whose *"plants are a paradise"*. (Cant. 4, 12).

SIXTH DAY

Victory over sin in our neighbor.

The Mother of all the living"
(Gen. 3, 20)

Consideration. The Blessed Virgin not only overcame sin *for herself* in her Immaculate Conception, but also put the demon to flight *for us*, thus becoming the cause of eternal salvation for many. Filled with grace from the very beginning of her existence, she continued to cooperate with grace and brought forth the Redeemer. Her example is an urgent invitation to a similar struggle and a presage of victory. Now, by her intercession in heaven, she makes the victory easy for her clients. Nor is this all. She inspires her servants to **aid others,** and thus to snatch them from the devil. For the spirit of Our Lady, **the Marian spirit, is necessarily apostolic.** One who frequents the school of Mary and strives to serve Christ under her leadership, cannot look on indifferently, while souls redeemed by the Blood of Christ rush to ruin, but spontaneously devotes himself to the defense and spread of **the kingdom of Christ.**

Witness the **holy women** in the Gospel! Witness **the Apostles** themselves: in the midst of tribulations, the Blessed Virgin is for them a source of consolation and of strength. Witness so many distinguished Saints, beginning with **the Fathers** like St. Ephrem the Syrian, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and St. Ambrose, down to **the Doctors** of the more recent ages, like St. Bernard, St. Francis

de Sales, St. Alphonsus Ligouri, and St. Peter Canisius; all joined apostolic zeal with a tender love of Mary. Thus through them is fulfilled the antiphon "*Rejoice O Virgin Mary; thou alone hast exterminated all heresies in the whole world!*"

Application. Before us also there stretches a wide field of action. Wherever we turn, immortal **souls are struggling** with the devil and eternal death. **The enemies of God**, and of the Church grow stronger; they corrupt men even in their boyhood, educate them into vice even in their tender years. How great is the power of the enemies of Christ everywhere in the world! How everything is made to serve them, the schools and the laws, the theatres and the streets, books and papers, immodest dress, dissolute morals, contempt of authority, social distinctions. Certainly, no one will be condemned unless for his own sins, but how hard it is to keep oneself from sin, no matter where he be! How happy one is to have **a fraternal hand** extended to him! How easily many can be preserved, if they be aided by Christian charity, persuading, admonishing, inviting, guarding, strengthening! How many souls could be snatched from the grip of the demon, if those whom, the grace of Christ has kept safe, would give themselves earnestly to gaining souls for Him!

But what is the Sodality for, if not for this? What does it seek, but to make **apostles of laymen**, so that they may help priests to gain souls? The kingdom of Christ needs nothing so much today as apostles–priests, religious and laypeople. The school for these last second to none, is the Sodality. Hence every effort is to be made to foster and develop it, so that it may perfectly imitate its Immaculate Queen, by destroying the demon's empire over so many souls.

SEVENTH DAY

The Lay Apostolate.

"They found the Child with Mary his Mother".
(Matt. 2, 11)

Consideration. Students of Mariology naturally ask *why Mary is always so closely united with her Son.* Why is it said so pointedly in Scripture in the first manifestation of the Reedemer to the shepherds, and afterwards to the Magi, that they found the Child *with Mary?* Why did St. Luke in his Gospel give so much space to Mary? and why did God in the Protevangelion, join to the prophecy of the Redeemer, that of the woman, who with her blessed Seed was to crush the head of the serpent? Various reasons are given by the Fathers and Theologians, one of which seems extremely suitable to our times: namely, *that all might see clearly the* **necessity of human cooperation** *in saving the world.* Truly the lay apostolate finds a striking model in the share taken by the Blessed Virgin in the Redemption. Christ was a priest, and in strictness He alone effected the Redemption. Mary was not a priest, but served the Priest most faithfully, and thus merited to prepare His work and to perfect it extrinsically. Does not God seem to say to us through Mary's example: "*See the high post reserved for the pure and devout soul which faithfully cooperates in the redemption of others!*"

Application. Here is both consolation and exhortation. We are not all called to the priesthood but we are all called to serve priests, to help the Church, i. e. to the lay apostolate (1). The humbler we are in spirit, the more fervent in prayer, the purer we are from sins, the more ardent in charity,... the more souls we shall gain, although we be laymen. Nor must we enter this sacred warfare as *individuals*, working alone; but in ranks, *in line of battle*, **organized in the Sodality** of Our Lady. The Sodality is not merely a confraternity for prayer, or a society for occupying boys and girls and keeping them out of mischief, but a thoroughly manly and apostolic organization which aims at rendering signal services to the Church of God. Well developed in strict accordance with its Rules, the Sodality is an extraordinary help to the priest in his apo stolate, for

1. It brings together the best of the laity.
2. It trains them in fait and virtues, thus laying a solid foundation for tireless apostolic labor.
3. It consciously inflames them with apostolic ardor and teaches practical methods of exercising zeal.
4. It urges its members to exercise their own ingenuity, to take the initiative under the moderation of the Director, to hold consultations, to defend the Church where possible, to see what evil is to be repelled and what good to be promoted.

There should therefore be a *sacred emulation* between individual Sodalities. Let them imitate the *first deacons*, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Let them imitate *the Blessed Virgin* by working for the redemption of souls.

EIGHTH DAY

Suppliant Omnipotence.

"Only in the kingly throne will I be above thee".
(Gen. 41, 40)

Consideration. The Blessed Virgin, enjoyed the peculiar favor of God for many reasons, of which the first was her immaculate purity. "*Blessed are the clean of heart.*" So great was this purity, that no shadow of sin opposed the granting of her prayers. Hence the Blessed Virgin is called by the Doctors of the Church "*Suppliant Omnipotence*". The fitness of the title is evident when we consider the triumph of the Blessed Virgin over sin and the world-wide dominion of the devil. For her victory did not end when the Redemption was accomplished on Calvary, but it continues to increase in splendor every day in the preservation, conversion and salvation of innumerable souls. Mary, the vanquisher of hell, is the mediatrix of all graces, the advocate of all mortals. Her most powerful prayers draw down daily showers of graces on hundreds of thousands of men. Her Son can deny her nothing.

(1) "The Church has not engendered and educated her children with the understanding that she should not look for any help from them though the necessities of the times should demand it but rather that *each one of them should put the salvation of souls and the wellbeing of the Christian cause before his own ease an private interest.*" (**Leo XIII** to the Bishops of Italy. Encyclical on *apt means of preserving the Faith among the people*, Feb. 15, 1882).

Application. What madness it would be to neglect this inexhaustible fountain of heavenly favors, not to render the Blessed Virgin propitious to me! Without grace, I can do nothing, neither be freed from sin, nor persevere in virtue, nor make any headway in the apostolate. The measure and the manner of my graces will be determined by the benevolence with which the Blessed Virgin intercedes for me. Whence it follows that all my security and felicity, depend on the power of Mary; and nothing should be dearer to me than to gain the largest possible degree of her protection for myself. The more constantly I seek her aid and the more faithfully I serve her, the more secure will be my salvation.

Now it is the Sodality of Our Lady which teaches me and helps me to gain all that. For the whole action of the Sodality, whether it tends to personal holiness or to the apostolate, is pervaded and ennobled by ardent devotion, reverence and love towards the Blessed Virgin Mary. We become accustomed there to do good and fly evil and to offer all such actions to the Blessed Virgin every day as services proceeding from filial love

NINTH DAY

The crown of victory.

" All good things came to me together with her".
Wis. 7, 11)

Consideration. See the happy consequences of th last victory, which the Immaculate Virgin won over the enemy of the human race. When the Son of God had been made man and the Redemption was accomplished and the Church had been instituted, how many many souls otherwise sure to perish, found the way of salvation! What renewal of fervor after Christ, what conversions of sinners, what peace and light, what order and happiness followed that victory! And all this was to find its consummation in Heaven. (Describe celestial happiness). What hope for us too! What thanks we owe the Virgin, whose immaculate purity was the first star in the dark night of our race, and through whose faithful cooperation our redemption was accomplished!

Application. Let me not forget the divine benefits which I have received through Mary. As often as I see her image and hear the Angelus, I wish to thank God and her.

But the best proof of gratitude and love are deeds· She, who conquered hell is seeking to enlist followers under her standard who will be willing to work for the salvation of souls. In the great army of the Kingdom of Christ, the Sodality of Our Lady forms a special corps. But do I know my obligations as a Sodalist? Have I read the Rules since my reception? Am I keeping them? What is my apostolic activity? To what Section do I belong? Could I do more in it? Might I not work in another Section also? Have I time, talents and education at my disposal which I am not using. What are the religious needs of my fellow citizens which I could satisfy in some degree? I will offer my services to the Director. If he cannot use me, I will go to some one who can. Failing that, I will work independently. *" Love ought to show itself in deeds rather than words."* It is thus that I wish to show my love for Mary. At the same time, I do not rely on myself to accomplish good, but I trust in the divine grace and in Mary's intercession.

If each Sodalist, under the inspiration of his Director, would examine himself thus and resolve and act accordingly, the whole spiritual and apostolic level of the Sodality would be raised, and a truly acceptable gift would be offered to our Immaculate Mother on her greatest feast. And when the Sodalist begins to see some of the good resulting from his activity, his esteem of the Sodality and his love for Our Lady will increase and he will be moved to say of both: *" All good things came to me together with her."*

With the reviews

The Catechetical Congress of Granada, Spain, prompted the *Bishop of Madrid-Alcala* to write. " The reign of Christ, " says the Holy Father, " will not be established except by the constant work of the Church in instruction and Christian education. " ***** The greatest of our aspirations, continued the Bishop, is to raise to the highest degree possible the intensiveness and extensiveness of the teaching of Christian: doctrine in our diocese.

It is praiseworthy and Christian, " says an anonymous writer in « *La Estrella del Mar* », (p. 492, Aug. 24, 1925) to receive the Sacraments, visit hospitals, and help the necessitous, *Nevertheless few works attain the importance of thè* **teaching of Catechism** which is the foundation of Christian life.

There is (he continues) no scientific, political or industrial ideal without its manifestations of life which men use to spread their ideas, attract proselytes, merit protection and win sympathy. And shall the Christian ideal be the only one to lack such manifestations? Must the religion of Christ, the only one which is true and universal, see itself reduced to silence or hidden in churches and in cloisters? *We must give signs of life and quit inaction.*

Who (he asks) should go to this Catechetical Congress? All those Catholics who realize what the name Catholic demands, all those who understand that it is the most glorious title we can boast. The amplitude of the Congress will permit everyone to belong to it, men and women, priests and persons of the world, rich and poor, wise and ignorant. Let every one bring his little offering, though it be but a grain of sand and with the aid of all we will raise a national monument which will be the honor and glory of religion and our country.

No excuse can be offered (he concludes) but that of laziness or bad will. As for those who stay away, let them not complain hereafter that the manifestations and labors of Catholics are lifeless. The fault will be that of those same Catholics, sleepy, inactive, incapable of the slightest sacrifice for their religious ideals, or, what comes to the same thing, Catholics without faith. (" *La Estrella del Mar,* " Aug. 24, 1925, p. 492).

The Congress of the **Sodality Union of Vich,** Spain, held last summer, passed a number of resolutions some of which will be of general interest. They include:

The Union will work for the canonical erection in **every town and parish** of **a Sodality** of Our Lady.

Consequently, the Union will write to all the parishes not represented in the Congress, inviting them to establish the Sodality among their parishioners, offering them cooperation principally through the subsection of **Marian Propagandists.** The Union will not desist until the Sodality is established or until it be definitely proved that its establishment is impossible.

Every Sodalist shall give five centimos yearly for the **expenses of the Union.**

Sodalists are urged to **help the Sodality Magazine** *Tota Pulchra* by subscriptions, literary contributions, and exchange of news items of interest to Sodalists.

It shall be a point of honor for all to wear the **ribbon and medal** of the Sodality.

The Major Officers shall be named by the Director with the consent of the Ordinary and the Parish Priest.

(*" La Estrella del Mar,"* Sept. 8, 1925 p. 497).

Film stopped by protests. *Fr. Garesche,* writing on *" The Scope of the Movies, "* in *" The Queen's Work "* for September, 1925, gives an interesting instance of the *power of protest.*

" How wide-reaching is the effect of organized suggestion and protest may be gathered from the following incident which was related to us recently by an important official in the distribution end of a great moving-picture company. " Some time ago," he said, " it was announced that our firm was going to undertake the picturization of a popular book. At once we received no less than two hundred letters and telegrams of protest from organizations and societies all over the United States. As a result of these protests we at once ent a scenario man and an attorney to the place where the picture was being produced to see what could be done about changing the character of the film. The objectionable features were all eliminated and we then sent a protest to the publishers of the book, asking them whether it would not be possible to get the author to correct the next edition of the book so as to conform to the eliminations made in the moving-picture film. On being properly approached, the author consented to do this. I do not know, " the distributor continued, " whether the new edition came out or whether the changes were actually made but this was certainly agreed to by the publisher and the author. " Such instances should be an ecouragement to our readers frankly to make known their objections to any evil picture and to commend and praise what they especially like and approve. "

Father Garesche continues to point out the advisability of **protest and suggestion before films are made.** He also draws attention to the fact that the Motion Picture Producers and Exhibitors of America (of which association Mr. Will Hays is President), invite constructive suggestions, **helpful criticisms** and advice which may help them to present proper pictures.

As between eighty and ninety percent of American films go abroad, and their world-wide popularity is increasing, Catholic organizations like the Sodality, should avail themselves of their opportunity to influence the character of the films which are to be presented to so many of their own countrymen.

Diego Suarez Sanchez, Sodalist of Madrid died on the Feast of St. Ignatius last at the age of 29. In a brief account of his virtues a fellow-Sodalist wrote in substance: From early youth, he regulated his own life most minutely. Though gifted with an extraordinarily keen sense of justice, he could not remember having deliberately done evil to anyone. No one ever saw a bad book or picture in his hands. Many poor persons helped by him have reason to regret his passing. The two months of his last illness were borne with invincible patience, accompanied by ardent desires for Holy Communion which he received daily when his condition permitted. At the end he exclaimed: " I fear nothing. I go to my center, which is God. " Following the suggestion of his parents, he offered to God the sacrifice of his life: " He has given it to us, " said Diego, adopting the thought of Holy Job. " He has given it to us; he has taken it away; may His holy will be done! " On receiving Holy Viaticum for the last time, he renounced all that he was and possessed. His parents then began to recite the Litany of Loreto which he answered clearly and calmly, unmoved by the emotion of those present, and when he had recited the last Agnus Dei, his soul passed to God.

Such was the death of a model Sodalist. Apparently he had no difficulty in uniting the life of the Sodality with that of a Third Order. They buried him in the habit of St. Dominic.

(La Estrella del Mar, Madrid, Aug. 24, 1925).

"....in the State of Denmark. „

You know how Saint Paul must have felt when he asked the Ephesians if they had received the Holy Ghost, and they answered that they had not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost. Well, we have often felt the same when we asked visitors to Rome if they had received the " *Acies Ordinata* „ , and their reply showed them to be from Ephesus.

Very strange indeed. We believe we send enough copies for the community reading rooms or libraries of our large houses, besides a copy for each Director of a Sodality, and no residence is overlooked.

Where the trouble is we can not say. We have looked over the addresses and they seem clear enough. The manner of wrapping the review is apparently satisfactory. The postage has always been paid, at least in part; if a balance remained to be paid through some oversight, the delivering office would make a claim on the recipient. Possibly it would be better to address each individual Director and other recipients, but the cost of

wrapping and posting is prohibitive. Hence we must send all the copies to a single individual and must trust to his charity to make the distribution. We would be pleased to have suggestions. We wish by all means to purify the State of Denmark.

Speaking of wrapping and posting, reminds us that the **cost of printing** is also very high. For instance, to print and post the July number cost us very much more than the **alms** received from our houses and colleges.

Hence we are forced to ask the charitable help of the houses of the Society to pay our expenses. Sudden results in the way of Sodality regeneration cannot be expected the moment a propaganda like that of the " *Acies Ordinata* " is begun. It is a propaganda of ideas, and those ideas must be given time to germinate and take root; moreover, as we live in an age ot publication, it is natural for the most often repeated idea to dominate attention; hence the necessity of repetition through monthly publications like the " *Acies Ordinata* ". Those in authority over Sodalities will find that monetary support given the " *Acies Ordinata* " will finally have its reward in the regeneration of their Sodalities.

ATENEO DE MANILA

Student apostles

The Student Catechetical Campaign described in the July issue of the " *Acies Ordinata* " has come to a close and results tabulated show that the Ateneo students assisted or organized 63 **Catechism centres** during the summer vacations. **5,006 children** attended these classes with **96 teacher-apostles** from among the Ateneo boys. Their flaming spirit of zeal extended over the whole length and breadth of the Archipelago. The centres reached from the northern tip of Luzon, as far south as Camagu in Mindanao. And it is definitely known that a considerable number of other boys made a genuine effort to instruct, but local conditions made their efforts entirely fruitless.

As a **Vacation work** this was surely most remarkable, and the boys deserve the highest praise for the zeal and fidelity they exhibited. The usual inertia and 'vacationitis', human respect and the fear of being called 'santo', ('goody' goody'), the frequent lack of direction and even cooperation from the authorities, the heat, the downright hardwork of it all, - all these and many other obstacles were overcome in la manner most admirable. It was a feat of which any school in any country could be justly proud, and is a tribute to the generosity and strength of Filipino boys, and to the excellent training received in the Ateneo de Manila.

It should be noted that this Ateneo Catholic Instruction League was but an extension of the **Catechetical Section,** of Our Lady's Sodality, composed largely, though not exclusively, of Sodalists.

Some of the **individual achievements** were almost incredible. In one town almost **400 children** were on the lists, with classes held every morning and every afternoon during six weeks of the hot vacation. I strongly cautioned the Captain to moderation, but so ardent was his zeal for the little children that he would take no rest except on one afternoon of the week. In another town, a young boy of First Year High School organized a centre of over **200 children** in an unpromising field where there had been only 8 children in the parish centre. And very significant to note, many of the best workers belonged to that tribe found in every twentieth-century school, the " jazz-hounds ". It speaks well for them if at the call of duty they drop so readily their saxophones and " jazz-whistles " and undertake vigorously this work of torrid self-sacrifice.

Like all good works, this Catechetical Campaign yielded **keen enjoyment** to the workers. Boy after boy returned to school telling of the genuine pleasure and happiness experienced while working with the little children. One boy writes:

... *But the thing which makes my vocation a 'lucky one' is that we are running on successfully our Catechism class.*

***** " *To be with them is my greatest pleasure.*** The children are very fond of us.* "

" *Perhaps there is not a single person in the town who does not appreciate the works we are running. People sometimes ask me, if we are given salaries by you or are forced to teach or start catechism classes.* "

" *Then I told them that we don't teach because of money or forced to do so, but because in that college the love of our brethren is cherished. This is the first time that this town has a Catechism class. So it's not wonder that they are surprised and delighted.* "

Boys, God bless them, are the same the world, over, generous and great-hearted. Given the right motives, they will do anything. As with the vastly greater Students' Mission Crusade of the United States, the vista of possible acihevement from this Students' Catechetical movement in the Philippines is almost unlimited.

George J. Willmann, S. J. (1)

The above experiment and its results point several useful lessons with regard to the Sodality of Our Lady

1. **Sodalists can and will teach Catechism. They** did it in Manila when at college; they continued it at home on vacation.
2. **Sodalists can carry out definite and workable plans.** They interviewed parents of prospective catechists, advertised through pulpit, press and movies. Influential persons were induced to become patrons.
3. **Sodalists can direct others in Apostolic work.** See the non-Sodalists from the College and the convent-girls enlisted and marshalled by the Sodalists.
4. **Sodalities can have societies entirely subject** to them. (Here the older Catechetical Section).
5. **Sodalities can develop independent societies** for works of zeal. (Here, the new Ateneo Catechetical League, " composed largely, though not exclusively of Sodalists ".)
6. **Sodalists can reach persons whom priests can not.** The priest had 8 pupils; the Sodalists 200.
7. **There is a personal work for each Sodalist.** Sixty children were working enthusiastically. The Sodalists left town, leaving others in charge. Returning a month later, they found only fifteen children.

(1) Mr. Willmann is also the author of the « *Ateneo de Manila* " article in the July number.

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